

## Harvest Safety/National Co-op Month

There is much to like about the fall season. Fall weather, with crisp and cool mornings that give way to sunny blue-sky days is hard to beat. This year's harvest yield looks to be promising as well. From the cooperative viewpoint, it is national cooperative month.

Electric co-ops are an important, but small subset within the larger cooperative realm. At Eastern Illini, we are continually seeking to provide reliable and high-quality service to our members. We know that we are not simply in the business of selling electricity, but part of a larger family of cooperative businesses designed to help improve your quality of life.

Please be safe in all farm related activities, and while traveling the township and county roads during harvest time. Be aware of the locations of poles and power lines.

Always treat all lines as energized and never drive over or through downed power lines. Call for assistance if



**MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT**

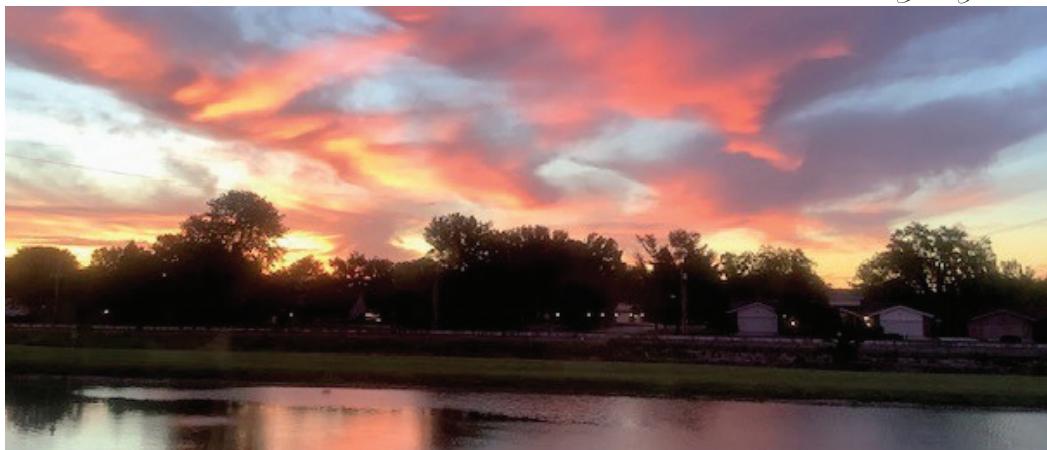
there is an incident or if something seems abnormal, and then wait for trained personnel and help to arrive.

All of us continue to meet the unique challenges associated with COVID-19. I am extremely proud of our employees' ability to maintain "normal" business and operations as we continue past 18 months of the pandemic's impact in Illinois.

EIEC is fortunate to have loyal and dedicated employees who strive daily to exceed our members' expectations. Please take a few minutes to complete our annual survey included in this newsletter or access it on line at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop). We utilize the survey results to track our performance over time to ensure that we are doing everything possible to maintain our excellent level of service to members. Stay safe.

Cooperatively,

*Bob Hunzinger*



Another sunrise, another new beginning. Champaign, IL 09.2021

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- View your bill
- Make a payment
- Compare usage by month
- Review known issues
- Report an outage
- Update account information

SmartHub is available online or through an application on your cell phone. Sign up today!

### Take the Member Survey on the back page:

Complete the MEMBER SURVEY for a chance to win one of 10 \$25 bill credits. Go on line to [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop) and fill it out on line or mail in the back page of the October PowerLines.

Your Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative 

# EIEC's Empowering Education Grant Program

EIEC is awarding \$500 grants to teachers in school districts within the EIEC service territory.



The Empowering Education Grant Program is designed for teachers to help fund projects that will inspire students and provide memorable learning experiences.

Teachers may apply online at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop). Apply through Friday, December 10, 2021.

**Teachers, APPLY NOW!  
\$500 Grants Available!**



# FORMER LINEMEN, GERRY KINNEY, SHARES HIS STORY

## Life can change in a blink of an eye



Eastern Illini employees had the privilege of hosting Gerry Kinney, former lineman at Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative, at a recent meeting. Gerry shared his story about how his life changed forever on July 16, 2015 while he was at work as a linemen.

"It was supposed to be an easy day," Gerry recalls. He was in the bucket truck working with his crew to put up a neutral line that had been knocked down during a storm. Gerry didn't realize his bucket was higher than it should have been. He remembers two occasions when he boomed the bucket up: once for a passing car and once to help his visibility. When he made that motion to tie in, his right index finger brushed the 7,200-volt power line.

Electricity entered his right hand, traveled through his chest, and exited his left hand. The incident happened so fast it didn't blink the system. Gerry himself didn't realize what had happened or the extent of his injuries.

"Honestly, it probably took me 30 seconds to realize I got into a wire," he remembers. "I reached down to move my bucket, and I couldn't figure out why my hand wasn't working."

So, he pulled his hand off the controller and tried his other hand. It wouldn't work either. That's when he saw his skin peeking between his long-sleeved shirt and gloves. It was a burnt red color. He then understood what happened and extreme pain set in.

"The pain came down my arms and was horrendous," he recalls. "I remember I was screaming for them to get me down."

Gerry was told his crew quickly realized something was really wrong and he was seriously injured. Fortunately for Gerry, the co-op provided the Air Evac helicopter with exact coordinates of his location, and the chopper was already warmed up for an event that day when the call came in. He was flown to Mercy Hospital in St. Louis and, despite his pain and injuries, stayed conscious the entire flight. He credits that to the anger he felt.

"I could not believe that I allowed that accident to happen. I was just mad," he says. "How in the world could I do something so simple and have this kind of accident? I'm not going to lie, I think about it today."

"All three surgeons that worked on me said they had no idea how I survived," he recalls. "They had never seen injuries like mine where the patient survived. That's a sign I'm pretty blessed."

Gerry spent five weeks in the burn unit at Mercy Hospital and underwent eight surgeries. In January 2016, he was healed enough to be fitted for prosthetic arms. Gerry admits it takes a lot of practice. While grateful for his prostheses, he admits their weight can get tiring.

Gerry has spent a great deal of time in rehab and has learned to do most everyday tasks without his hands. He has devices that slip over his stub, so he can feed himself or brush his teeth. His wife, Denice, puts food in special bowls, so he can easily pop the lids off. Gerry describes his bathroom as a car wash for himself. It is equipped with three shower heads, strategically placed sponges, and a full body dryer.

Getting used to his new way of life hasn't been easy. "You can't believe how many times I've failed, but you can't believe how many successes I've had either," Gerry says.

Because of all the help he's received, Gerry has gained his independence back. For example, with his prosthetic hands and a special attachment on his steering wheel, he's able to drive again.



He still feels his hands. "They always feel like they're burning. That never goes away," he explains. "It feels like a chemical burn. The only time I notice that they're not hurting is when I'm busy."

"I loved my job. I miss linework terribly, and I loved all the people I worked with," Gerry says. "But on July 16, 2015, that path ended abruptly. That day, I started down a new path. At times, I thought that path was impassable, but now I'm optimistic about the one I'm on. I've gotten to do and see things I never would have otherwise. Gerry spent time informally talking with employees after his presentation and shared more about the many blessings in his life."



## Use generators safely

# GENERATOR SAFETY

## USE BACKUP POWER SAFELY

When used properly, portable and standby generators are a great option to provide backup power during brownouts or blackouts.

**Learn how to use generators safely** with the following tips:

### GENERATORS

#### Location



Always keep generators at least **20 feet away** from your home



Never operate a generator in an **enclosed space**



Make sure the generator has **3-4 feet** of clear space above and on all sides for proper ventilation



Keep generators **away** from doors, windows, and vents



Always **direct exhaust away** from your home

#### Use



Always use **grounded cords** and inspect cords for damage prior to use



Use the **proper cord** for the wattage being used



Always use **GFCI protection**



Make sure to start / stop generators when **no electrical loads** are connected



Keep generators dry, **do not operate when wet**, and refuel when cool

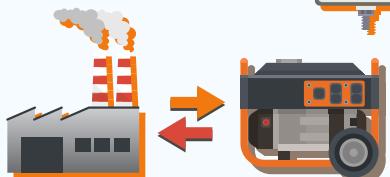


**Do not overload** generators



Do not plug a generator directly into your home, connect items being powered **directly to the generator**

### TRANSFER SWITCHES



Transfer switches, whether manual or automatic, allow you to choose between **utility power or backup generator power**



Transfer switches are the only way to **safely power** your home's electrical system



Using a transfer switch **prevents backfeeding**. This occurs when your generator becomes a power source for the **surrounding area** and can damage your home, your neighbor's homes, and injure workers trying to restore power

### CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING PREVENTION



Improper use and installation of generators could **cause CO poisoning**



Make sure your home has **carbon monoxide alarms** outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home



CO can kill in as little as **5 minutes**

#### Symptoms of CO poisoning



Dizziness



Headaches



Nausea



Tiredness



If you experience CO poisoning symptoms, **get fresh air, do not reenter areas, and call 911**.

## EASTERN ILLINI EMPLOYEE NAMED 2021 CO-OP RISING STAR

# Paul Crutcher: Electrical Engineer



Electric cooperatives have always attracted standout leaders who helped guide the program through tough times.

From the beginning, when heroic efforts were needed to ensure the movement took hold, to battles in the 1970s and '80s for the survival of the Rural Electrification Administration, to the existential deregulation fights of the 1990s, co-ops have always been blessed with bright, passionate advocates who emerged from within their ranks and became rising stars.

The industry is once again facing challenging times, as broad transitions in power generation, consumer expectations, laws and regulations and grid technologies drive rapid and systemic changes. Add to that an ongoing wave of retirements that will, according to NRECA numbers, see some 20,000 of the program's 80,000 employees head for the exits in the next 10 years, and it's clear the time for a new crop of co-op standouts has arrived.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association recently named 20 co-op employees as Rising Stars in the industry and Paul Crutcher received this prestigious honor. The five NRECA judges said the common denominators among the 20 winners were a passion to carry out the co-op mission to serve members, an undeniable expertise and confidence, a deep well of creativity, and a willingness to go the extra mile. The judges selected winners whose dedication and uniqueness stood out as exceptional.

Paul Crutcher, EIEC electrical engineer, was nominated by Vice President, Brad Smith, for the 2021 Co-op Rising Star award. Brad nominated Paul in June

and he was chosen from among 83 submissions as a national rising star.

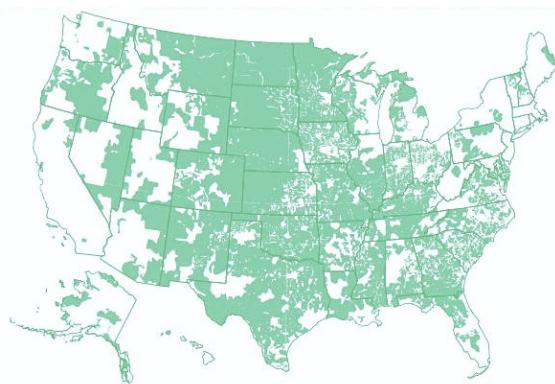
Paul Crutcher has greatly improved Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's use of technology since joining the co-op from Ameren, an investor-owned utility. He has hastened the co-op's use of electronic mapping through multiple use cases and accelerated the decision-making process for a new AMI system, which the co-op will implement next year.

"Paul continues to look for innovations and products all the time," writes Vice President of Operations & Engineering Bradley Smith. "He is always coming up with more projects than I can give him."

Crutcher also has helped the co-op churn out two important documents: a full life cycle construction work plan for overhead and underground lines and a cost-of-service study.

Crutcher manages a staff of five and is generous with his knowledge and time, says Smith. "He's an amazing team player, and there are people from all departments that come to him for help."

## Cooperatives power 56% of the nation's landmass



CO-OPS OWN AND MAINTAIN **42%** (2.7 MILLION MILES) OF U.S. ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION LINES THAT SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES SERVE **42 MILLION** PEOPLE ACROSS **2,500+** COUNTIES, INCLUDING **92%** OF PERSISTENT POVERTY COUNTIES

CO-OPS POWER OVER **20 MILLION** BUSINESSES, HOMES, SCHOOLS AND FARMS IN 48 STATES.

**832 DISTRIBUTION CO-OPS** ARE THE FOUNDATION OF THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NETWORK.

**63 GENERATION & TRANSMISSION COOPERATIVES** PROVIDE WHOLESALE POWER TO DISTRIBUTION CO-OPS.

# MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Complete & return for a chance to win one of 10 \$25 bill credits

We'd love your feedback. We created this survey to hear all about what's important to you. Take a moment to complete this short survey for a chance to win one of 10 \$25 bill credits. You can complete the survey on-line at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop) or mail it in with your electric bill payment.

<b>Please rate your satisfaction with Eastern Illini on each of the following:</b>	not at all satisfied      very satisfied									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing excellent customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to resolve issues or problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting business in a professional manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly and courteous employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledgeable and competent employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing valuable programs and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community involvement and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering good value for the money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing energy efficiency information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charging reasonable rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a minimum of outages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restoring power quickly after an outage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For the following questions, rate your answer based on a scale of 1 to 10

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Considering all your experiences, how satisfied overall are you with Eastern Illini?

not at all satisfied                                        very satisfied

To what extent has Eastern Illini fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?

falls short                                    exceeds

Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think Eastern Illini compares?

not very close                                    very close

If you could choose your electric company, how likely is it that you would choose Eastern Illini again?

very unlikely                                    very likely

How likely are you to purchase an electric vehicle in the next 5 years?

very unlikely                                    very likely

First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

List your account # so we can contact you if you are one of the 10 winners of the \$25 bill credit drawing.

Your account number can be found on your electric bill. Account #: \_\_\_\_\_